E.   COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Purpose: This section contains rules and procedures related to application approvals, denials and withdrawals, including:

- Notification requirements
- Eligibility effective dates for approved applications
- Limitations on denial actions
- Circumstances under which a denied application may be reconsidered

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WAC 388-406-0050 Completing the application process.

(1)   Application processing is completed when the department makes an eligibility decision and:

    (a)   Authorizes benefits and, for food assistance, mails or gives a written approval notice to the applicant; or

    (b)   Mails or gives a written withdrawal or denial notice to the applicant.

(2)   The applicant will be notified of the department's eligibility decision in writing. A notice of denial or withdrawal must meet the adequate notice requirements in WAC 388-458-0005.

(3)   For cash, medical, and food assistance, an applicant may voluntarily withdraw an application orally or in writing.

(4)   For cash assistance, an application is considered withdrawn when the applicant:

    (a)   Fails to appear for a scheduled interview required for eligibility determination; and

    (b)   Does not contact the department to reschedule the interview within thirty days from the date of application.

(5)   For approved applications, the date the applicant becomes eligible for assistance is established according to WAC 388-406-0055.

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(6)   A decision to deny an application must be made according to the requirements of WAC 388-406-0060.

WAC 388-406-0055 Date of eligibility for approved applications.

The effective date of eligibility for approved applications is:

(1)   For cash assistance, the earlier of:

    (a)   The date the department has sufficient information to make an eligibility decision; or

    (b)   The last day of the time limit period specified in WAC 388-406-0035.

(2)   For medical programs, as specified in chapter 388-416 WAC.

(3)   For food assistance, except as described in subsections (4) and (5) of this section:

    (a)   The first day of the month following the end of the previous certification period for:

        (i)   All households that reapply before their previous certification period ends; and

        (ii)   Migrant and seasonal farmworker households that reapply within one month after their previous certification period ends; or

    (b)   The date of application for all other households.

(4)   For food assistance applications approved after reconsideration as required by WAC 388-406-0065:

    (a)   The date the household provides required verification when:

        (i)   The application is denied because the applicant fails to respond to a written request for the verification, and

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(ii)   The household provides the requested verification after the end of the initial thirty-day time limit; or

(b)   The date the household becomes eligible for TANF or SFA when:

(i)   The household is denied nonassistance food assistance; and

(ii)   Is later found to be categorically eligible for food assistance because TANF or SFA is approved.

(5)   For food assistance applications not processed within the thirty-day time limit, the first day of the month following the month of application when:

(a)   Required verification is not provided by the household by the end of the initial thirty-day time limit;

(b)   The household provides the required verification by the end of the second thirty-day period; and

(c)   The delay in providing the required verification is the fault of the household.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1.   For approved applications processed outside the applicant's catchment area, redirect the next month's needs and transfer the case record to the correct CSO (see **BENEFIT ISSUANCE** and **CASE RECORDS**).

2.   See the appropriate categories in this manual for worker responsibilities for program requirements such as **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**, **CHILD SUPPORT** assignment and cooperation, etc.

3.   See the **WorkFirst Implementation Handbook** for case manager duties for approved TANF cases.

ACES PROCEDURES

1.   Process Application Months

The purpose of Process Application Months is two-fold. The first is to perform data validation (final edits needed) on all application months prior to the ongoing month. Second, the worker is able to modify application data for a specific benefits month in the application period. The worker performs this when the client's circumstances are different for a specific month.

a.   COPYBACK

(1)   When there are no active AUs, all the information entered during Interview is copied back to all months from the month of application through the ongoing month.

(2)   If a case has one or more active associated AUs, copyback does not work.

b.   ACCESS PROCESSING

(1)   From the AMEN type [P] and the first AU ID. <TRANSMIT>

(2)   At the Process Application Months (APP1) screen all benefit months in the application period are listed, from the application month through the ongoing month. All benefits months needing validation of eligibility determination data will display a review status of "Final Edits Needed."

(3)   Type [Y] in the (Sel) field for the application month. <TRANSMIT>

c.   UPDATE DATA

(1)   ACES displays the (ADDR) screen.

(2)   If a specific screen is desired, type the appropriate screen ID in the (Screen ID) field.

(3)   Type in any necessary changes.

(4)   When finished entering data, or if no changes are needed, type [DONE] in the (Screen ID) field.

(5)   Review all information displayed on the (DONE) screen. <TRANSMIT> to process.

d.   COMPLETE PROCESSING

(1)   This returns you to the (APP1) screen.

(2)   The month just completed should display "Waiting Review."

(3)   Type [Y] in the (Sel) field for the next month with a review status of Final Edits Needed.

(4)   Repeat all the above steps until all months have been validated.

(5)   Press <F13>. This returns you to the AMEN and completes the Process Application Months process.

2.   **Finalize Application**

Finalizing the Application is the last step in the process of completing an application on ACES. The purpose of Finalize Application is to confirm the eligibility and benefits for the pending application.

a.   ACCESS FINALIZING

(1)   From AMEN type [Q] and the first AU ID. <TRANSMIT>

(2)   ACES displays the Finalize Application (APP2) screen.

(3)   The (Sel) filed of the first finalize line is pre-filled with a [Y] and the Review Status indicates the current status of the AU.

(4)   <TRANSMIT> to access the Non-Financial Eligibility (ELIG) screen.

b.   CONFIRM NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

(1)   The (ELIG) screen is used to review the results of ACES non-financial eligibility determination and confirm the results. The (ELIG) screen is similar to the (STAT) screen of the Interview process. AU and client status have been updated by ACES to reflect the eligibility determination. Status reason codes are displayed when the AU or a client is denied.

(2)   Review the screen carefully.

(3)   Enter [Y] in the (Confirm) field. <TRANSMIT> to access the Financial Eligibility screen.

c.   CONFIRM FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

(1)   One of the financial eligibility screens will be displayed, depending on the program type of the AU. Below is a list of the financial eligibility screens:

(a)   CAFI -- Cash/Medical Financial Eligibility

(b)   FSFI -- Food Stamp Financial Eligibility

(c)   MAFI -- Medical Financial Eligibility

(d)   SPEC -- Eligibility for Special Programs

(2)   Review the data on the screen for accuracy.

(3)   Type [Y] in the (bnft Confirm) field to confirm the results.

(4)   Type [Y] in the (Notice Override) field if you choose to send a letter rather than have ACES send a notice. See **NOTICES AND LETTERS**.

(5)   Press <TRANSMIT> to return to commit the information to ACES and return to the (ELIG) or (APP2) screen.

(6)   (ELIG) re-displays if there are pending application months that have

not been confirmed.

(7)   (APP2) displays when all of the application months have been confirmed.

d.   COMPLETE FINALIZING

(1)   When Eligibility Determination and Benefits Calculation screens have all been displayed and confirmed, the (APP2) screen appears with a change. A new field, FINALIZE, appears on the left-hand side with a ?.

(2)   Review the data on the (APP2).

(3)   Type [Y] in the (Finalize) field.

(4)   If this is a Medical or Food Stamp AU and you wish to issue benefits locally, enter a [Y] in the (Is Initial Issuance OTC?) field. If benefits are issued locally, you will not be able to update any other information for this client until after overnight batch. Enter the correct valid value for the type of issuance in the (Disposition Indicator) field. <F1> for values.

(5)   If you wish the benefits to be processed overnight and mailed to the client, enter [N] in the (Is Initial Issuance OTC?) field.

(6)   Press <TRANSMIT> to commit the information to the database and complete the Finalize Application process.

e.   HELPFUL HINTS

(1)   When finalizing multiple AU's on the same day, the worker should process the grant first so that the grant income is reflected in the Food Stamp calculation. The calculation will be adjusted overnight in batch processing; but until then, the Food Stamp AU screens will display incorrect benefit   information.

(2)   If a Public Assistance or Medical Assistance AU is denied or closed, ACES automatically continues with another type of Medicaid determination. This is called trickling and sprouting. See **CHANGE**

OF CIRCUMSTANCES. An AU may qualify for an extended Medicaid Coverage or be eligible for a Medically Needy Medical Coverage group.

(3)   If any eligibility results screen appears incorrect, the worker must press <F3> to exit the Finalizing process and prevent incorrect data from being committed to the database. Go back into [O] or [P] to correct the data to achieve the correct eligibility results.

(4)   All benefit months for an AU must be finalized in the same session. Only one AU is finalized at a time. If multiple pending AUs exist, follow the above instructions for each AU.

3.   **Expedited Services**

a.   POSTPONED VERIFICATION -- APPLICATION DATE ON OR BEFORE THE 15TH

(1)   Even if verification is postponed, if the household is eligible for benefits ACES establishes a regular certification period based on policy and the household circumstances.

(2)   In all months other that the initial month enter reason code [552], Failed to Provide Verification in the (AU Stat Reasons) field on the (STAT) screen during Processing.

(3)   Change the date in the (Rev End Date) field on the (FSFI) screen to the last day of the initial month. This prevents additional benefits from being issued until the postponed verification is received.

(4)   Override the notice and send letter A01f. The letter must include:

(a)   Benefits amount,

(b)   Certification period(original certification period based on household's circumstances),

(c)   Postponed verification the household must provide to receive benefits beyond the ongoing month, and

(d)   Receipt of postponed verification may result in ineligibility or reduction in benefits amount without advance notice of adverse action.

(5)   When the household provides the postponed verification and is determined eligible to receive benefits, J Screen the original food stamp AU ID.

(6)   Update case information as needed. Don't forget to remove the reason codes at both the AU and Client level on the (STAT) screen.

(7)   Confirm and finalize the case through [O],[P], and [Q].

(8)   On the (FSFI) screen, change the (Rev End Date) field to reflect the last month of the certification period which was established based on the application date of the original application.

b.   POSTPONED VERIFICATION -- APPLICATION DATE ON OR AFTER THE 16TH

(1)   ACES issues benefits for the initial and ongoing month as a combined benefits and establishes a regular certification period based on policy.

(2)   To process, follow all steps listed above except :

(a)   Enter reason code [552] in the (AU Stat Reasons) field on the (STAT) screen in all months other than the initial month and the ongoing month.

(b)   Change the (Rev End Date) field on the (STAT) screen to the last day of the ongoing month.

(3)   When the household provides the postponed verification and is determined eligible to receive benefits, [J] screen the original food stamp AU ID. This cannot be done before the first day of the month following the month in which the review was due.

(4)   Confirm, finalize, and correct the (Rev End Date)

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WAC 388-406-0060 What happens when my application is denied?

(1)   The department will deny your application when we cannot decide your eligibility based on the information we have.

(2)   If we ask you to provide information and you do not provide it by the due date, we will not deny your application unless this information is needed to decide your eligibility.

(3)   We will deny your application for everyone in the assistance unit when:

    (a)   You do not provide information that is required to decide eligibility for everyone in your assistance unit; or

    (b)   Your situation causes everyone in your assistance unit to be not eligible.

(4)   We will tell you about our decision to deny your application by following notice requirements in WAC 388-458-0005.

(5)   If we deny your application, you may request a fair hearing. If we deny your application because we do not have enough information to decide that you are eligible, the hearing issue is whether you can provide the needed information.

(6)   For medical and cash assistance applications:

    (a)   If getting medical information is slowed down beyond your and our control, we will not deny your application;

    (b)   If you have good cause under WAC 388-406-0045, we will wait to deny your application; and

    (c)   If you do not meet a medical spenddown obligation, we will not deny your medical application before 30 days after the end of the base period as defined in WAC 388-519-0110.

(7)   For food assistance applications:

(a)   If you do not keep your first scheduled appointment:

    (i)   We will send you a letter telling you to get in touch with us to schedule another appointment; and

    (ii)   We will deny your application on the thirtieth day after you applied if you do not schedule a new appointment.

(b)   If you do not provide the requested information within ten days:

    (i)   We will deny your application right after the ten days if you do not have a pending application for TANF, SFA, or SSI; or

    (ii)   We may wait to deny your application up to thirty days from the date you applied if you have a pending application for TANF, SFA or SSI.

(c)   If we do not deny your application within the first thirty-days from the date you applied, we will deny your application at the end of the second thirty-day period

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CLARIFYING INFORMATION

For food assistance, when the thirty-day period ends on a weekend or a holiday the denial notice is sent the last working day before the thirtieth day

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1.   If a food assistance applicant does not show for the required initial interview:

    a.   Send a letter immediately informing the client ot contact their worker to schedule another appointment.

    b.   Pend the application until the thirtieth day after the date of application.

2.   If a food assistance applicant fails to show for the second interview:

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a.   Continue the case as pending until the thirtieth day after the date of
       application.

b.   Deny the application on the appointment date if the interview is scheduled
       after the thirtieth day.

3.   Deny the application on the thirtieth day if the household does not reschedule the
       interview.

ACES PROCEDURES

An AU may be denied by ACES or by the worker.

1.   **ACES Denial**

a.   ACES may deny an AU/client based on AU/client data. If the information
       does not meet the eligibility criteria for the selected program, ACES will deny
       the application. This includes situations where the client fails to submit
       information and/or refuses to cooperate. In order to complete the application
       process, the worker must finalize these denials.

b.   ACES will also automatically deny and finalize any case that has completed
       screening but has not had an interview initiated before the SOP (Standard of
       Promptness) date. SOP dates are as follows:

       (1)   TANF/SFA = 30th day

       (2)   FS/FAP = 30th day

       (3)   GA = 45th day

       (4)   MA, Disabled = 60th day

       (5)   Pregnancy = 15th day

       (6)   All others = 45th day

c.   ACES will not deny a case on the SOP date if an appointment is scheduled
       through the ACES Scheduling component (see **INTERVIEW**

REQUIREMENTS) and is more than 30 days from the application date. This allows for clients scheduled in the future not to be denied prior to their appointment, yet automatically denies clients that do not show for an interview.

Note: For combined pregnancy medical and other assistance applications - pregnancy medical does not require an interview and most other assistance programs do. If an appointment is scheduled **and** the client fails to show **and** Interview has been accessed to start processing the medical, ACES will not automatically deny the other AU based on SOP. The worker must manually track the other assistance units.

2.   **Worker Denial**

a.   If there are no known changes to AU/client data that will automatically change the status, the worker may manually deny an AU/client by entering a reason code on the (STAT) screen.

b.   To deny all months of the application, access the Interview option from the AMEN.

c.   To deny a particular month within the application period, access the Processing option from the AMEN. Type [Y] in the (Sel) field next to the benefit month to be denied.

d.   Type the appropriate status reason code (in the (AU Status Reasons) field to deny and AU or in the Client level (Rsn) field to deny a client) on the (STAT) screen.

e.   Complete and finalize the application process.

WAC 388-406-0065 Reconsideration of denied applications.

(1)   For medical and cash assistance, an applicant is allowed thirty days from the date of a denial notice to provide information needed to determine eligibility as specified in the notice.

    (a)   A redetermination of eligibility will be made and eligibility will be determined based on the information provided unless the applicant's circumstances have changed to the extent that additional information is needed to determine eligibility.

    (b)   If eligibility is approved based on the information provided, the eligibility date is based on the application date of the denied application.

(2)   A denial of an application for medical benefits will be rescinded if the applicant, following the thirty-day period specified in subsection (1) of this section:

    (a)   Timely requests a fair hearing to appeal the denial; and

    (b)   Provides additional information needed to establish eligibility, including medical expenses sufficient to meet spenddown if the applicant shows reasonable cause for the delay in verifying the medical expenses.

(3)   For food assistance, an applicant is allowed thirty days from the end of the initial thirty-day period to provide information needed to determine eligibility as specified in a denial notice. If the information is provided, the eligibility date is determined as specified under WAC 388-406-0055.

(4)   A denied food assistance application will be re-evaluated within sixty days of the application date when the household was:

    (a)   Applying for both food assistance and TANF, SFA or SSI; and

    (b)   Denied food assistance before TANF, SFA or SSI was approved.

ACES PROCEDURES

1.   Reopening differs from reinstating (see **CERTIFICATION PERIODS**) an AU in that a reopen action is generally used for those clients that have been ineligible for one month or are not eligible on the first of the month following a termination.

2.   An application made by a client to reopen any program must use the previously assigned AU ID. This provides important history information and also allows the worker access to AU data previously entered.

3.   Reopening a case reopens it as the same program code, type code, and medical coverage group that it was prior to being closed or denied.

4.   Always use reopen on an AU that does not have a begin date. Never reinstate an AU that does not have a begin date displayed on the (STAT) screen.

5.   To reopen, follow the same four steps as processing a new application (Screening, Interview, Processing, and Finalize) with the following exceptions:

   a.   To screen, type [J] from the AMEN and enter the AU ID of the terminated or closed AU. <TRANSMIT>

   b.   (NAME) screen -- you cannot modify the Head of Household name.

   c.   (MEMB) screen -- you cannot modify data for existing members, but you can add or delete members.

   d.   (NMCL) screen -- displays only if adding new members.

   e.   (INCH) screen -- displays all discontinued AU IDS for which the client is the Head of Household. You cannot add a program. Type the application date in the (Appl Date) field. This date cannot be prior to the original application date for the AU.

   f.   For food assistance AUs that are reapplying and have received food stamp benefits within the last 30 days, enter an [L] in the (FS Concurrent Benefits) field on the (DEM1) screen for the month in which they previously received benefits. This will prevent the initial months benefits from being prorated.